

reethought

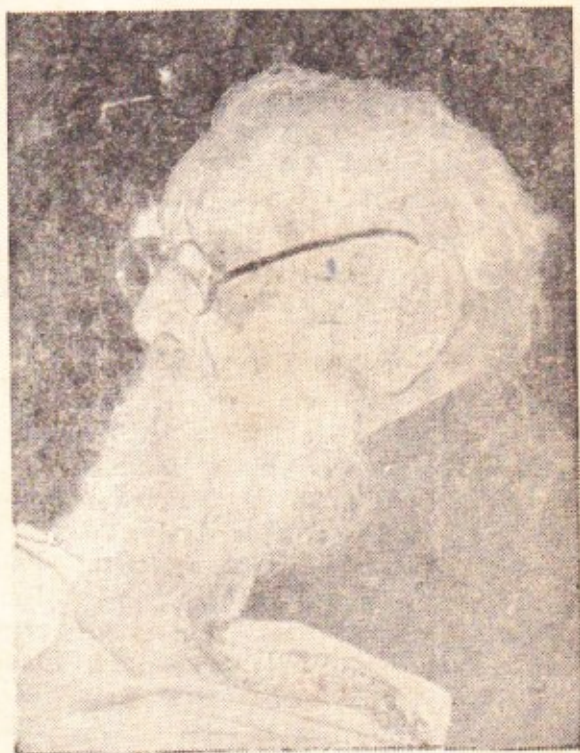
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Philosophy
of

ERIYAR
E. V. R.

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ergyman was the First Sly Rogue that met the First Fool —Voltaire

LETTERS

ACHILLES' HEEL OF THE RATIONALIST

Sir,

"I wish I had said it." These words of Oscar Wilde came into my mind as I read Mr. R. Lakshminarayanan's aptly titled article "Achilles' Heel of the Rationalist".

I have no hesitation to describe it as one of the finest articles that have appeared in FREETHOUGHT and can agree with him 100%. He has touched upon a serious shortcoming (Perhaps the only one) of brilliant intellectuals like Dr. A. T. Kovoov and others who for this reason are looked upon by the leftists in this country with sceptic reservations.

My long study of marxism and rationalism has convinced me that without marxism, rationalism can only add up to merely a mental exercise and arm-chair chit-chat.

Well said, Mr. R. K. You have spoken for many.

—Nelson Gomez, Cochin

* *

Sir,

The readers owe a debt of gratitude for the publication of the thought provoking article Achilles' Heel of the Rationalist. It exposed the inherent weakness-lack of scientific analysis of the society-of many a popular rationalist. They believe that Rationalism can flourish divorced from Marxism. Does it not tantamount to superstition? Don't we see that athelism reigns supreme in socialist countries while the rationalist movements bereft of socialistic theory register one step forward and two steps backward?

Rationalism minus marxism is but capitalist nihilism. I do not know why the super-rationalists close their eyes to the fact that religion is nourished by capitalism and that they indirectly feed the religion by ignoring the significant role played by the militant marxism.

I once again thank you for having published the article which is eye-opener for many.

—A. Sivalingam, Tiruchirapalli

* *

FREETHOUGHT

Sir,

I am a regular buyer and reader of FREETHOUGHT. It influenced me a lot. The cartoon on the cover page of July 78 issue is marvellous.

—T. S. Sreenivasa Rao, Kakinada

* *

Sir,

"Sisyphus" published in the July issue of FREETHOUGHT is not mine, but is printed in such a way that it looks as if I am the author. I had only sent a copy of it on a separate sheet of paper without my name or signature.

I request you to be good enough to publish a note in the very next issue of FREETHOUGHT and save me from the blame of plagiarising.

—G. K. Nettar, Mangalore

(The error is very much regretted—Editor)

* *

ENDOWMENT FUND

Sir,

I am very glad to know that the Rationalist Endowment Fund has been launched. I hope there will be a good response from Rationalists from all over India. I am sure the fund will give the IRA a sense of financial stability however modest the amount of the fund may be. It will grow steadily as time passes.

I am glad to see the improvement in the printing of the July issue of FREETHOUGHT. I think it is very important to further improve the printing of the journal and use a little better quality paper even if it costs a little more money. It is important for the impression it makes and the image of the movement abroad and in India.

A. Solomon, Brussels (Belgium)

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Periyar is not merely a person, but a phenomenon' ... C. N. Annadurai

Vol. VIII September, 1978 No 9

FreeThought

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Editorial | 259 |
| The Vacuum Argument - Myth, Mystery or Fact? | |
| -P.K. Narayanan | 261 |
| God check mated | 263 |
| Possession by spirits | 271 |
| Influence of Caste system in Indian Society- S. L. Bharathi | 275 |
| Hypn sis and its Possibilities - N.K. Sabapathy | 278 |
| News and Notes | 279 |
| Readers' Forum | 282 |
| Book Review | 284 |
| Test for Reason | 286 |

E. V. R.'S RELEVANCE

A giant among rationalists and the most forceful and effective among them all. Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy was described by Mr. K. M. Balasubramaniam thus:

"Socratic in his hatred of superstition, Shavjan in his crusade against shams, Voltalrean in his vendetta against the vindictive, Tolstoyan in his touching rural simplicity, and Jinnayan in his subtle greatness."

That a towering Periyar had to stride the length and breadth of South India, particularly Tamil Nadu, for nearly half a century typifies the magnitude and importance of his mission. He at once signified anti-brahminism, danger of casteism and irrelevance of religion and god. Instead of ignoring or ridiculing Periyar, if the leaders had implemented his programmes seriously, we would not witness today atrocities against Harijans, incidents such as in Villupuram, communal tension and resurgence of Brahminism. In fact, if the Indian National Congress had listened to him, the party would not have passed into the hands of reactionary opportunist politicians. A social revolution would have been ushered in and the nation would be reaping the benefits of 20th century progress.

In his own inimitable forthright manner, he used to tell the so-called intellectual was proverbial and he knew the educated hypocrites every progressive move of the



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EDITOR:

C. A. SESHADRI

piano and the soul the musician who extracts from his piano any melodies he liked. They have divided their being into two halves. "The sinful Body and the immortal Soul." For them therefore, knowledge of the eternal Soul was pernicious! Any attempt to understand the subject was forbidden!

These were the results of dualism in the field of Natural Science. For years, human mind was a prisoner of idealism and to the idealists the mind was mysterious. Mysterious mind should not be disclosed to Natural Science. They therefore, accommodated it as an unknowable precious mystery.

This stage formed a great retarding force in the study of human mind and intelligence. It blocked the way of truth in Natural Science. Neurologists of the past were mostly under the influence of this mystic cloud which prevent them from handling the problem of mind in real objective spirit. History of Sciences of even the 19th and 20th centuries is Missing field of psychology.

Lack of objectivism and empirical evaluation led these Scientists to formulate a halo of romantic hypothesis about mind, soul and god. They degraded into a stage no better than that of religious men of delusions.

IDEALIST WAY

How beautiful are the early morning hours: The sun has not yet appeared, the eastern horizon is red and purple; the sky above wears enchanting colours. Tree tops peep into the farflung morning glow. Birds hidden in the thick leaves, sitting on the twigs cry out at their throats length, nay sing their beautiful songs.

How superb, how enchanting, refreshing refreshing and enlivening scenario, indeed!

Supposing an Idealist attributing all these to the glory of the God Almighty He declares nonchalantly. "The birds are praying to the God. They are praising the glory of Almighty!"

Goodness! What proof is there that the birds are praying to the God? That they are praising the glory of the Almighty? In this pretty glittering morning hours

What proof is there that the birds are aware of a God, a creation of man?

No proof absolutely. That is exactly what the idealists do not need at all

They are guided by their faith, their beliefs in non-existent things and powers. Objectivism is foreign to their intellect. Their senses are in the misty shadow of rocklike subjectivism. They can't visualise anything beyond the subjective images already established by their faith and pursuits. They are simply helpless.

After resting peacefully over the night, the birds wake up with full of energy and vigour. They are ready to go for another day's battle, battle for food, for satisfying the procreational urges. When dawn approaches, they cry out, jumping from twigs, getting ready for the day. The collectiveness in their choral singing enthralls as stimulus. Their conditioned behaviour for generations has formed a sort of, instinctive (i.e. an unconditioned reflex, about which more details are given in the chapters to follow) habit in them to wake up at a particular time to move about and to cry till the light of the day spreads clearly and evenly everywhere. It is vital for their safety, and success. It is not a question of God, created by man. It is a question of existence and adaptability in the material world which is very much here on this Earth.

(to be cont. in next Issue)

FREETHOUGHT

GOD CHECK MATED

(A MULTI PUROSE UNIQUE QUESTIONNAIRE)

A. Harnath and A. Suryanarayanan

INTRODUCTION

Most believers believe that an unbeliever's disbelief is also a blind belief just like their own belief. For, most believers would not have met any un-believer for the simple reason that the latter are so few. On the other hand an un-believer daily meets scores of believers since he lives in the society of believers. That is how a Rationalist knows the line of thinking of the believers and their weak points, but a believer hardly knows the logic of a Rationalist.

You may be amazed that we are trying to question the very existence of God. Are you afraid of being a party to it? Do you think that even to suspect the existence of god is a Sin? Even taking for granted God exists, as compared with other anti-religious, anti-social, un-ethical and un-lawful atrocities like cheating, bribing, gambling, smuggling, black-marketing, lying, raping, etc., thinking is not a sin. In fact it is a virtue.

The theists can be broadly classified into two categories-the first is the priestly class and the other is their followers. The former would have already gone into details of theology and unless their minds are completely closed and they lost their entire thinking faculties, a majority of them would be knowing at least in their heart of hearts the fallacies in their beliefs and preachings. For professional and other reasons they have however to maintain their beliefs. This category is incorrigible.

The second category consists of innocent people who are led to entertain all sorts of blind beliefs. Given an opportunity they are prepared to resort to introspection and retrospection and stand corrected, if necessary. While the professional believers as well as the confirmed Rationalists are far and few between, these un-committed people form more than 90% of the population. They however appear to be committed to some religion or other and some cult or other because of the psychological and physical proximity to the particular cult. They are not exposed to the other Religions or schools of thought. Once he is given an opportunity of being exposed to the Rationalists, spate of questions, he would realize that none of his beliefs can stand the test of science, logic, reason or even commonsense. The Rationalist is capable of questioning anything - even if it is accepted by millions of people and even if it is believed for thousands of years.

Though there are hundreds and thousands of questions, if all the questions have to be listed we need huge volumes. We have therefore restricted them to less than 100 more important questions which occur to many a Rationalist but to very few believers. The purpose of this questionnaire is mainly to arouse thinking among the believers. Though it is hoped that many believers, would immediately after reading this questionnaire, would be convinced of the tenets of rationalism, even if they start thinking or rethinking on the subject of God, the purpose of this questionnaire will have been achieved.

Though the discussions and debates between believers and rationalists are going on for centuries, the oral discussions between the two groups tend to go off the track resulting in dead-locks and stalemates. So this questionnaire will help both the groups to discuss various relevant issues in a methodical and logical sequence.

Briefly, the following would be the shortcomings of oral discussions

1. The number of rationalists is negligible as compared with the believers.
2. Want of leisure time which would be convenient to both.
3. The more aggressive man tends to suppress the weaker man though the latter has stronger points.
4. The older person, or a person in a better status stands at an advantage.
5. The person who loses an argument feels insulted.
6. It is difficult to stick to a track and proceed in a sequence.
7. The presence of mind of the persons arguing would be limited.
8. The two persons would be using different terms in different senses.
9. The contradictions in one's arguments cannot be apparent.
10. There would be no record of discussions and results, if any.

Some questions as also some of the suggested answers may appear to be sarcastic and satirical, but they are not meant to hurt the feelings of anyone. Since the questionnaire is intended for different people of different standards, all possible answers have been suggested. So is the case with such questions.

To sum up this questionnaire has been prepared to make people think and get convinced of the principles of rationalism and not to ridicule the believers.

As this is an unique attempt, there is lot of scope for further improving this questionnaire in the subsequent editions. Suggestions in this regard are therefore invited from Rationalist Sympathisers.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please note the following points carefully before you proceed to answer the questions

1. This exercise is not necessary for you, if you are not a believer. If you are a rationalist, you may however use this questionnaire for one of your believer friends to bring out the fallacies in their arguments. Even if you are a believer but admit that your belief in god is only a blind faith or you feel god is inexplicable you need not care to fill it up. This questionnaire is intended only for those who go all out in defence of god.
2. If you are a believer, try to answer all the questions seriatim, just by ticking the appropriate suggested answers and striking off whatever is not applicable. You may tick two or more answers also as long as they are not contradictory to each other. Where no answers are suggested you may write down the answers as briefly as possible and as unambiguously as possible.
3. While answering subsequent questions, if you so desire, you may come back to any or more of the earlier questions and change your answers any number of times. We therefore suggest that you may use a pencil and an eraser.
4. You have to however complete answering all the questions, ensuring that your own answers are not contradictory to each other.
5. There is no time limit for completing the questionnaire. You may take even a year or two but our only request is that till such time that you are able to answer these simple questions please do not try to argue in defence of god.
6. For answering these questions you are welcome to refer any books of any religion and consult any number of your friends including your high priests.
7. If you finally give up your attempt, you are then one of us. You can help your other friends to see the light.
8. You need not feel ashamed even if you are unable to answer this questionnaire. No one could do it so far.
9. Most of the present day rationalists were all believers in yester-years. There is therefore nothing wrong in today's believers becoming to-morrow's rationalists. What we expect is that every one must think, think and think and then act.
10. The first person who answers All the questions without Any Contradictions or vague, ambiguous or irrelevant replies will be given a reward of Rs.1000/-

SECTION 1 — GOD

- 1 . 1 . 1. Do you believe god exists ? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure
(If yes, proceed further)
- 1 . 2 . 1. Do you think your belief in god stands (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure
to reason ?
(If yes, proceed further)
- 1 . 3 . 1. In your opinion, what exactly is meant (a) Allah (m) Mother
by the word god ? (b) Brahmah (n) Nature
(c) Christ (o) Om
(d) Duty (p) Perfection
(e) Energy (q) Queen
(f) Fire (r) Righteousness
(g) Goodness (s) Sound
(h) Humanitari- (t) Truth
anism (u) Universe
(l) Idols (v) Life
(j) Justice (w) Light
(k) Knowledge (x) People
(l) Love (y) Atom
(z) " Super human being worshipped
as having power over nature and
human fortunes". (Dictionary
meaning)

(If your answer is from d to y no one denies the existence of the same and you are as good (or as bad !) as a Rationalist and the questionnaire is not for you. Only if your answer is a, b, c, or z proceed further sticking to the same meanings.

- 1 . 4 . 1. Do you think that god is
Omnipresent (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 4 . 2. Omnipotent (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 4 . 3. Omniscient (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 4 . 4. Omnific (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 4 . 5. Benevolent (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 5 . 1. How many gods are there ? (a) One (b) Two
(c) Three (d) Three crores
(e) Innumerable (f)

(If your answer is two or more gods
the questionnaire may be construed
as reference to two or more gods)

1.6.1. Where does god exist ?

- (a) Somewhere within the Universe
- (b) Outside the Universe
- (c) All pervading
- (d) Heaven

1.6.2. If (a) to question 1.6.1 where exactly
does he exist ?

- (a) Banaras (b) Mecca (c) Rome
- (d) Moon (e) Sun (f)

1.6.3. If (b) to question 1.6.1 where exactly
does he exist ?

1.6.4. If (c) to question 1.6.1 where does he
exist ?

- (a) in all men
- (b) in all living creatures
- (c) in all living and non-living things
including air and space

1.7.1. If god exists in all Men what exactly is
meant by 'incarnation' ?

1.7.2. Why should the prophets be held in
great esteem ?

1.7.3. How are the "High priests" superior
to ordinary people ?

- (a) they are more knowledgeable
- (b) they are pious
- (c) they have supernatural powers
- (d) they conquer death
- (e) they do not feel hungry
- (f) they observe celibacy

1.8.1. Whether god had a beginning ?

1.8.2. If yes, when was he born ?

1.8.3. Why was he born ?

1.8.4. How was he born ?

- (a) Yes (b) No
- (a) Before creation of Universe
- (b) Along with the Universe
- (c) After the creation of the Universe
- (a) To save human beings
- (b) To save all creatures
- (c) Just for fun (Leela)
- (a) He was created by himself
- (b) Created by man

1.9.1. If god preceded the Universe where
was he before the Universe came into
being ?

1.9.2. If the Universe preceded god, where
from did he come into the Universe ?

- 1 . 10 . 1. Do you think god has a form ? (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 10 . 2. If yes what sort of form ? (a) Human form (b) animal form
(c) ~~more than one form~~
- 1 . 10 . 3. What would be the size of the form ? (a) Bigger than Universe
(b) Smaller than Universe
(c) Equal to the size of universe
(d) Something like an idol
- 1 . 10 . 4. What is the sex of god ? (a) Male (b) Female
(c) hermaphrodite (d) Neuter
- 1 . 11 . 1. Do you think that these forms are capable of being changed from time to time ? (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 11 . 2. from place to place ? (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 11 . 3. from religion to religion ? (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 12 . 1. What do you think of the powers of the god with a form ?
- 1 . 12 . 2. Do you think that its powers would be more intensive at places close to the form ? (b) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 12 . 3. Can the form recognise the people approaching it ? (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 12 . 4. Does it have more love or affection for the people praying ? (a) Yes (b) No
- 1 . 13 . 1. How did you come to believe god ? (a) Because majority believe in it
(b) My elders told me
(c) I learnt from religious scriptures
(d) I saw him in temples
(e) I got an enlightenment
- 1 . 14 . 1. After answering all the above questions do you still think your belief in God stands to reason? (a) Yes (b) No

(If yes, proceed to the next section)

SECTION 2 — GOD AND WORSHIP

- 2.1.1. Do you practise idol worship? (a) Yes (b) No
 (If 'yes,' proceed further and if 'no' straightaway go to the next section)
- 2.2.2. What is the object of idol worship? (a) Material happiness in this world/Heaven
 (b) Spiritual happiness in this world/Heaven
 (c) Mental peace
 (d) Occult powers can be attained
- 2.3.1. Is idol worship necessary for man alone? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.3.2. If so, how are other animals, birds and other creatures able to seek god's help?
- 2.4.1. Did you ever find any material benefits derived because of prayers alone and without self-effort or sheer chance? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.5.1. Do the idols in the temples derive powers from devotees' concentration? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.5.2. If so, can we make use of that power? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.5.3. If we use it will it not get exhausted? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.6.1. Are the idols in places like Benaras, Thirumala, Rome having more powers? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.6.2. Do you go to pilgrim centres? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.7.1. Do you think god knows only some languages? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.7.2. Do you require a priest to plead your case to god? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.7.3. Do you go to priests, Clergymen etc.? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.7.4. Do you think your priest will be getting more benefits than you from god since he is nearer or dearer to god? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.8.1. Do you think idol worship is only the first step to realize god? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.8.2. Do you also belong to the same group? (a) Yes (b) No
- 2.9.1. How should god be worshipped? (a) As stipulated in scriptures
 (b) As per the current practices
 (c) As per the directives of priest
 (d) As per one's own wishes

2. 10. 1. If you pray to god for your mental peace or to show your gratitude why should you not pray at home instead of going to temple, etc
2. 11. 1. Why do you offer food (prasadam) to god ? (a) To show gratitude
(b) Otherwise god will die
2. 11. 2. Do you think god expects gratitude ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 11. 3. Do you think god likes to be praised ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 11. 4. Do you think the food offered to god and ordinary food have difference in value ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 11. 5. In your opinion in what way will eating prasadam help people ? (a) They will be healthy
(b) They will be prosperous
(c) They will go to heaven
(d) No useful purpose
2. 11. 6. Do you think people would offer food to god if he really eats away whatever is offered ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 11. 7. What would happen if poisonous food is offered to god and the 'prasadam' is eaten by innocent people ? (a) Those who offer such food will die immediately
(b) Those who eat such food will die immediately
(c) god will die immediately
(d) All the three will be safe
2. 12. 1. What sort of powers can be attained by using holy ash and the like distributed at temples etc. (a) Material powers
(b) spiritual powers
(c) No powers
2. 12. 2. Do you think that it will not work unless we have faith in it ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 12. 3. If so, do you have such implicit faith? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 12. 4. If no, why do you use such ashes ? (a) It may help
(b) It will not harm
2. 13. 1. Do you think you resort to prayer on your own accord ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 13. 2. If so, are you independent of god's control ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 13. 3. If not, why do only some people worship god ?
2. 14. 1. If your answer is 'c' to 1. 6. 4, how do you explain the strange phenomenon of some parts of god existing in men (devotees) worshipping some other parts of god existing in stones, metals, paper etc. (idols, pictures etc)
- After answering all the above questions do you still think :
2. 15. 1. prayers are necessary ? (a) Yes (b) No
2. 15. 2. Your belief in god stands to reason ? (a) Yes (b) No
- (If your answer is 'yes' proceed to the next section.)

Possession By Spirit

Mr. G. S. Kumar

Madhupur, Bihar

I have heard and read in the past many instances of persons having been possessed by spirits. But I have always dismissed them as cases of mental illusions or cases of hallucinations. But the case that took place in our office premises in June 78, and witnessed by all the members of our office, had been a waking experience badly shaking my earlier notions about the spirits.

This case, whose details I am going to give in the following pages occurred within the premises of office of Survey of India, Patharchapti, Madhupur, S. P. Bihar, India on 15th June 78 and kept us all in tension till 22-6-78. Our office is a double storeyed (old) building known locally at Madhupur as "Lal Kothi". Our office was shifted into this building in November '76 from Bhubaneswar. The office functions in the greater part of the ground floor and three families stay in the first employees floor and two in the ground floor. Some reside in the out-houses attached to the compound wall. Mr. B. B. Gouda, an

employee used to occupy a small room on the Northern side of the building attached to compound wall. Gouda aged 25 years, belongs to Ganjam district of Orissa state.

On 15-6-78 Gouda was seen by the guard on duty Mr. Sarju Ram, returning from the market with a bag in hand around 7 p.m. The guard during his rounds around 9-30 p.m. noticed that the door of Gouda's room was open and that Gouda was lying in an unconscious state with head portion of his body lying under the cot. He called Mr. Bhagirath Singh, Head Clerk who was working in his room and woke up Mr. Swamy, Surveyor and myself residing in the first floor. We all went to the room of Gouda

This is the report sent by the author Mr. G. S. Kumar, B.E. (Civil), A.M.I.E., A.M.I.S., Dip. Aer. Phot. (I.T.C.), who is an admirer of Rationalists, on a recent incident that took place in his presence. According to him, he had discussions about this with a few persons in the field and also met and discussed with persons who were possessed by spirits and were treated. Since he was unable to find logical explanations for some unusual aspects, he seeks the comments and explanations by any member of I.R.A. Readers are therefore requested to send their reactions and explanations. Dr. A. T. Kovoov has already been requested to give his own comments.

—Editor

and on examination found that Gouda was breathing but was unconscious. On seeing the body of Gouda in that state we immediately rushed him to the residence of Dr. S. S.

Daruka, Asst. Civil Surgeon, Madhupur. It was about 10-45 p. m. After seeing the condition of Gouda, Dr. Daruka accompanied us to D. C. Hospital, Madhupur. Assisted by us and the compounder a rubber tube for vomiting was forcibly inserted (because of clenched teeth) in the mouth of Gouda. Dilute permanganate solution was poured into the stomach through the tube resulting in vomiting. Physical examination of the vomitted liquid did not indicate presence of food or any other odour. Vomitting was done suspecting this to be a poison case. After this, intravenous feeding of saline water and some injections were given. Upto 17-6-78 he was more or less unconscious with occasional signs of improvement.

Injection and saline water continued. A few spoonfuls of Glucose water and milk preparation were consumed by him but with great pain in the throat while swallowing. At times he used to murmur names of persons with whom he was familiar. On 18th morning he experienced lesser pain in swallowing water/liquid. On 18th evening when some of us were standing near his bed around 5 O'Clock, his condition deteriorated so badly within a few minutes that it appeared that death was imminent. The doctor was immediately brought and saline water and injections were given. After about half-an-hour some physical recovery was visible though he was unable to speak. Same situation continued the next day also. He was able to swallow little water/liquid with great difficulty. On 19th evening also there was similar deterioration in his condition. At that time the doctor and compounder were also present. With saline injections there was some improvement. On 20th and 21st June, his condition was fairly better. He could consume

liquid food with lesser difficulty and there were signs of recognising persons known to him though he was still not able to express himself. It will be relevant to mention here that an expenditure of about Rs. 300/- was incurred so far on injections, saline bottles etc.

According to the two persons attending on him, on the midnight of 21/22-6-78 (around 2 p. m.) they suddenly heard Gouda shouting with violent physical outbursts. One of them rushed and brought the compounder (with in about 15 minutes) who stays nearby. By that time, the Patient calmed down into sleep. The compounder checked and found pulse to be normal and went back with the idea of examining him in the morning. On 22nd morning as usual I went to the hospital at about 7 a.m. We were unsuccessful in waking up Gouda though his respiration appeared normal. He opened his eyes which had distant looks and a stony gaze. His senses were not functioning at all. Even scratching on his feet produced no reaction in him. The compounder was called. He examined and said that decision about further course of action can be taken after the doctor comes a little later. Just at that time Rajkumar, driver, Electricity Board, an acquaintance of ours happened to be there. He suggested that the patient be shown to a "Maulvi" nearby who is good at tackling cases of persons possessed by "spirits". More in desperation than hope, I agreed. Within a few minutes, Rajkumar brought Maulvi who had a careful look at the lifeless body of Gouda. He asked us the patient's name and did some calculations on a small piece of paper and drew a diagram on another paper and put it and poured water in it. As directed by him we managed to make Gouda swallow one

tea-spoonful of water from the glass After making sure that the water poured into his mouth has gone through the throat by raising the head slightly, the Maulvi made some religious chantings and blew air into each of the ears of Gouda. Suddenly to our great surprise we noticed stiffening in his body accompanied with sound. The Maulvi confirmed the presence of evil "spirit" inside him and set out on further course of action.

Besides myself, Maulvi, Nayeem and Rajkumar three more i.e. Chaman Lal, Charles, Ghakkan Ram (Survey of India) and the compounder were also present. As directed by the Maulvi we made Gouda sit on the cot with our support. Maulvi lit a candle and wanted mustard oil which was made available. On another piece of paper he wrote something and rolled the paper and covered it with cotton. He then poured the mustard oil after some chanting into both the ears of Gouda. Nayeem was holding the head of Gouda and blocked the ears by inserting the fingers. After this the Maulvi asked all of us to hold Gouda firmly as he is likely to become violent in a few seconds. Then the Maulvi took the rolled paper with cotton and ignited it in the candle flame. He extinguished the burning roll and brought it near the nose of Gouda. As soon as the smoke was inhaled, Gouda became violent and was trying to get out of our hold. The Maulvi warned us not to loosen the hold. Though all the 6 of us were able to hold it



MOULVI making Gouda inhale the smoke while Gouda tries violently to get out of the hold of the persons holding him.

was a tough job to hold him. Every time the extinguished paper roll was brought near the nose, Gouda was shouting with violent movement. Each time Maulvi was asking "Who are you? What is your name? At the fourth time, Gouda spoke, "I will tell you. I will tell you. Don't kill me." Thus the process of questions and answer was set. For extracting answer to each question the Maulvi would make him inhale some smoke. The gist of answers that came out of Gouda in about 20 minutes are given below:

"I am from Arrah. My name is Suraj* I am not an enemy of Gouda He was my friend He did so much wrong If wanted to take him with me. I caught him on the neck** Now I will leave him I will not come to him again I will not come to anybody in that compound,

* Suraj Bansi Ram was the driver in our office belonging to a place called Arrah in Bihar who died in a jeep accident on 26-12-77 near Tata Nagar

** This explains for the terrible pain experienced by Gouda in swallowing even spoonfuls of water.

At this stage he spoke to say that he was hungry for days. There was some milk preparation in a small container which was offered to him. When it was taken near Gouda, he grabbed it and drank it in a couple of seconds followed by gulping a glass of water. This was watched by all of us with great astonishment because till last night Gouda was able to take only spoonfuls that too with pain while swallowing. The Maulvi explained that the food given has been consumed by the spirit inside and not Gouda and that it will consume huge quantities if fed further. He continued with his questions which brought forth following replies:

"I will go, I will go. I want the blood of a fowl. The blood may be put in an earthen pot and left below the Neem tree in front of the office. Make way for me I will go away".

The Maulvi cleared way and asked Nayeem to remove the fingers from the ears. Gouda fell down exhausted. Maulvi sprinkled some water. Gouda opened his eyes after a few seconds and started recognising us all. He could sit on his own. He ate bread and egg without any pain in swallowing. It was like a miracle to see the change that came in him within about half-an-hour. The compounder of the hospital was a witness to all this.

Gouda was then brought back to the office from the hospital. He was weak but could consume food. By evening, his looks again became blank and was not able to recognise anyone. Maulvi was called who confirmed that the spirit has again come on him. This time the entire staff and some family members were also watching. The Maulvi repeated the ritual of the morning. This time at the very

first inhalation of the smoke, Gouda started pleading that he will go away. Maulvi questioned why he had come again after promising to leave in the morning. The voice said, "It was a mistake for which punishment has been received". The Maulvi then cancelled the agreement made in the morning to offer a fowl. The spirit agreed to it. Finally it left. After a few seconds Gouda started recognising all of us. When enquired about his condition, he replied that he feels as if "a heavy stone is on his head". The Maulvi chanted for a few seconds and tied a "Taveez" (charm). Thereupon, Gouda informed that he was all right. We kept him under special watch and care for a few days.

On 24-6-78, I asked Gouda some searching questions about the various happenings. The gist of his answers are given below:

I was lying on bed on 15-6-1978. I don't remember what happened to me after that. The first time, I started recognising my surroundings was on the evening of 22-6-78. Later some of the persons in the office told me about the treatment given to me at the hospital and the Maulvi's treatment. I don't remember all this. I remember very vaguely one scene. I am lying on a cot in a graveyard. I am surrounded by fearful appearances with swords in hands and demanding various things (I don't remember exactly what they were demanding from me) I am assuring them that I will bring those things for them. I also remember that at times I had the vision of Goddess in the temple in my home town'.

SOME MORE INFORMATION

Within 3 days, Gouda recovered completely and was able to attend to all
(Cont. on page No. 285)

Influence of Caste system in Indian Society

[This is the key paper presented at a session of the 1st Convention of Indian Rationalists in Palghat —Ed]

The influence of caste system is all pervasive in Indian society adversely affecting all aspects of its life. It is causing immense injury and havoc dominating the vital fields of politics and religion. Throughout Indian history it has been belustering aggression, ignorance and injustice. It proves to be a stumbling block to all progressive social changes. Whatever claims it may put up towards conserving traditions and culture, being basically irrational, it was functionally negative even from the start and came to be a continuous residuum of all the absurdities of social behaviour. It is a standing proof of successive defeats and degradation of the Indian society at the hands of every invader and newcomer.

The greatest harm that the caste system causes to Indian society is to perpetuate a dichotomy between intellect or technology and work or labour. It has thereby degraded all vitally important productive occupations such as agriculture and industries to the lowest scale of values, going to the extent of dubbing some of them as even sinful worthy of segregation. This cultural perversion persists even today in that science

and technology are not given their due and rightful place. We see an attendant or clerk usually treating with disrespect a prosperous farmer or artisan. This cultural perversion was pointedly condemned by the author of Tirukural two thousand years back and Gandhi today.

I was surprised when I read recently how Brahminism introduced the fine caste

— **S. L. Bharathi**
(Vice President of I.R.A.)

system including that of untouchable Pariahs in the distant east like the countries in Indo-China and the island of Bali (Hinduism and Buddhism 3 volume by Sir Charles Elliot). The casteism priests, innumerable of gods and goddesses and even Sati are the visible marks of the fused but not synthesised Mahayanism and Brahminism left any countries like Combog and Champa under the aegis of Sanskritised Chola and Pallava dynasties. "The Brahmins" observes Sir Charles Elliot "indeed never ceased to give their sacrificial system their theoretical and when possible their practical approval, for it embodies a principle most dear to them, namely the other castes can obtain success and heaven only under the guidance of Brahmins and by rites which only Brahmins can perform. The guiding principle of Brahmins has always been whatever may be the creed, they must be its minister" (page 70, vol I and 191 vol. II).

If you start at the bottom knocking the death of untouchability; you will end by striking at Brahminism and if you start at the summit of knocking out Brahminism you will succeed in eradicating untouchability. The meet of these two movements will be the nodal centre at which caste ceases to exist.

Ganahi commenced his campaign cautiously from one end and E. V. Ramasami from the other end. But before the two would meet, Brahminism awoke and assassinated Gandhi and countered effectively the Periar EVR. Both are as usual adopted as Kaliyuga avatars in the cause of Sanatanic Hinduism, and shrines and statutes are installed in plenty. Brahminism indeed stoops so low only to conquer.

Both the Harijan Sevak Sang and self Respect Movement had their origin in the inescapable necessities of the situation context. The pseudo-nationalism of the Congress set out only to free India from the rule of the white Faringi, came in collision with the problem of depressed classes. Gandhi had to undertake an epic fast unto death to annul the British Prime Minister's award of separate representation and Dr. Ambedkar yielded when a solemn pledge was given by caste Hindu leaders to eradicate untouchability within ten years under the Pune Pact. Gandhi formed the Harijan Seva Sang to do the task. To coax the believers he invented the formula Sarva Dharma Samanvaya as an elixir but it proved to have no better efficacy than his charisma. EVR the General Secretary of the TNCC sought in vain to aid the bud of caste virus that raised its head in the Shermadevi Gurukula founded as a national institution by the late V.V.S. Iyer but later learnt to his cost that he had thereby only stirred a hornets nest. For it led to the wholesale resignation of Brahmin leaders under Rajaji from the congress under the pretext that what was sanctioned by religion cannot be interfered with by the congress. Though he had the support of Gandhi on this issue, the Vaiko here realised soon that swaraj without communal justice meant only Brahmin raj of dharma sastras. Failing in his efforts he walked out of the congress at Conjee-

aram with his followers like Ramanathan. He started the Self Respect Movement and rejected Hinduism in favour of Atheism. The erstwhile Justice party merged into his Dravida Kazhagam and we have now the offshoots of DMK and AIADMK capturing power successively assuring communal justice, progressive social reforms, fighting Hindi imposition and striving for state autonomy. For a student of sociology carefully scanning the still extant parts of ancient Tamil literature, it is not hard to trace the gradual superimposition of the caste system on a people who extolled the principle of universal brotherhood and citizenship.

The constitution and the laws make untouchability an offence on paper but untouchability and caste are now posing a socio-economic threat to our peace and unity. Violent caste conflicts as in Bihar are becoming the order of the day. Even in the South the NDP of the Nair community warns that Bihar will be repeated in Kerala. JP, awakening like Rip Van-winkle after a prolonged withdrawal from the public scene could neither spell out clearly his total revolution nor enlist sufficient youth force to bring it about. The President, the PM and the VVIPs with mental reservations make their pilgrimages to the sage who sits idle in Paumar like the oracle in Delphi. They look to Venkateswaras, Rameswaras, Ayyappas and Durgas in vain.

— READ —

CHARVAKA

(Telugu Rationalist Monthly)

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Unlike avatars godmens are appearing in abundance. In Tamilnadu, though the Archa-kas Act was held valid by the supreme court it is not implemented on the pretext of certain observations of one of the judges, a brahmin that agamas are to be followed. The Brahmin is still holding on to his last vestige of superhuman symbolism and asserts his powers by mustering all strength around temples yagnas and asthik organizations. Eminent scientists and judges are flocking around them not to speak of our governors and ministers.

Politics and religion possess very many similarities in enjoying and reaping benefits and privileges invoking the cult of loyalty and bakthi. Both claim today omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotency. Both assert absolute sovereignty and demand 'varagathi, from all. Both rely on the strength of a hierarchical bureaucracy armed with rewards and punishments. Both freely exploit the instincts and emotions to hold in leash the gullible public. A hierarchical bureaucracy found in all sectors of state exhibit to day its callous away providing both the Parkinson's law of growth and the Peters's principle, of the employee tending to rise to his level of the employee tending to rise to his level of incompetence in a hierarchy.

Among that great religions of the world there is none which countenances many hystorical immoral and cruel rites as Brahminism, observes Sir Charles Eliot. The social corruptions and convulsions we see today are ominous and portentous. The Indian society is placed in a state of lawless violence today on account of its being caste ridden and guardians of laws. The constitution has been shattered by repeated questionable amendments and beaten out of shape by the congress in power for thirty years. The Parliament alone can never claim full sovereignty or all

constituent power. The CPM and some states rightly claim and revision, of centre state relations. Only a new constituent assembly elected by the people can frame a constitution and seek to bring about a consensus and legitimacy.

However much you may attempt to stretch and begot the meaning of 'Secularism' one can never put into it the ideal of Hindustan, and Hindu feared to be the objective the RSS and Jansangh. The press, The Radio the TV and all mass media are geared to the propagations of bakthi cult and no adequate attention is paid to foster scientific outlook or attitude. Even writers by their stories spread the superstition of ghosts, spirits and life after death.

Will rationalism widen our perspectives and show the way of life in those days of global pressures and conflicts?

Let Reason Prevail Upon Superstition

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Hypnosis — And its Possibilities

Hypnosis a term widely known but misunderstood even among the educated circle lacks any specialised literature on it which may interest the common reader. This article tries to explain certain possibilities of hypnosis.

Hypnosis means induced sleep. The induction is made through suggestions. The hypnotised person reacts actively to what the hypnotist tells him to do.

The stages of hypnosis are divided by various authors. The main stages are three. First a slight drowsiness and general muscular relaxation will be followed by the flexibility of the muscles and comes the final stage which makes possible to demonstrate the most surprising phenomena of hypnosis. It is in this stage various feats are done by the godmen and hypnotists.

Its use in medicine is invaluable. But those who practise it in medical field are very limited. We do not have any institution, recognised to teach this art. So those who fall in love with this subject learn it in the oldest form of learning—trial and error.

Hypnotherapy is highly useful in treating the diseases which are having some sort of psychological impact. Most of the diseases which are having their origin in mind i.e. sub-conscious. It is highly effective in dealing with morbid fear of non-existent diseases, manias, stammering and in speaking and in breaking bad habits. Even child birth can be made easier. The people who have weakened their will by excessive drinking can be helped to get out of the moron they have found themselves in. Among many psychothera-

N. K. SABAPATHY

putic means auto suggestion and self-hypnosis are of great value in getting relaxation and to regain energy in a shorter time.

Recently the technique of hypnosis has been spreading to new spheres. In particular attempts are under way to use it for raising the level of assimilation material in the process of instruction. It is being used even for criminal investigation in USA.

Investigations being carried out recently are important not only for the solution of some or other concrete tasks but also for the final debunking of all manner of mysticism for a materialised explanation of the so-called mysterious phenomena of the human mind.

The ever increasing interest in the study of hypnosis and related phenomena and penetration into the depths of its psycho-physiological essence opens up new opportunities for its practical use. △

Mr N. K. Sabapathy tries to put the possibilities of Hypnosis in a nutshell. He will be glad to reply to any questions or doubts on the subject. He also undertakes to assist the FREETHOUGHT readers if they have any psychological or other problems. Though his services are available free of cost, any donations or the Association are most welcome. For appointment please write to I. R. A.

NEWS AND NOTES

BREAK THROUGH IN CREATION

Even as the 'great' saviours of the world and their 'holy' messengers are striving hard to propagate the 'Ultimate Truth' and the 'Immortal' character of the soul, the first test-tube baby has been born. A baby, which has been conceived and nurtured in the test-tube before being planted into a woman's womb thanks to the two great doctors Dr Patrick Steptoe and Dr Robert Edwards.

The baby born is not strictly a test-tube baby of our imagination. The baby was not completely created in the laboratory. But the fertilization part was done outside the body of Mrs. Brown. An egg at a specific time in the menstrual cycle was removed from her body and fertilized with her husband's sperm in the laboratory. The fertilized egg was artificially cultured for four and a half days, after which it was implanted back into her womb for further growth as normal baby. This test tube method of birth would be welcomed by couples, who desire a baby but cannot have one due to the defective or damaged fallopian tube.

Man has today made a break-through-he has made a giant leap in understanding creation. The creator will soon be among the unemployed - may we register him in anticipation our employment exchange. But alas, there is a perplexing question. What is his nationality and besides oh! we need his nativity certificate duly attested by a Tahshildar!

Soul Searching

The birth of the test-tube baby has dealt another blow to the concept of soul. Is the soul in the sperm or in the ovum? Or,

does each of them contain half a soul? If so, can you imagine the millions and billions of souls destroyed everyday by ova and sperms which do not result in fertilization? At which stage of the fertilisation or birth does a soul-emerge? If soul enters at the time of fertilisation the two eminent doctors do not declare to have seen its entry. If the soul is a part of the creator's manifestation of himself within the human-being, will this new Miss. Brown lack a soul? The soul-searching must be deeper than what our saints and godmen can afford to.

The moral imbalance and ethical degradation about which the religious men complain and the sigh of relief which the moderates heaved stating that at least the two scientists only fertilized the sperm and ovum of a 'married' couple are all narrow perspectives. As in other fields man has to accept the modern changes. In spite of the non-patronising attitude of one of the wealthiest and scientifically well developed nations, the United States (due to non-approval by the Federal Ethics Advisory Board) the test-tube baby has been born. Now the time is ripe to rewrite Ethics and review our moral standards. This success will surely establish the useless and irrational nature of the concept of the Creator.

Ms. S Sudha

* *

ANOTHER G.R.A. VICTORY IN GUJARAT

After two successful massive Gujarat wide people's campaigns against Baba Jai Gurudev saket and Goddess Gayatri Yagnas, under the dynamic leadership of

Shree Narendra Dave- GRA Secretary and guidance of Shree Kamalashanker Pandya, IRA President another grand victory was achieved by GRA against Gujarati Films depicting and encouraging Miracles, superstition and unscientific attitudes.

Huge public meetings were organised, thousands of leaflets were distributed, "Dramatic-Scenes" were staged and massive demonstrations and processions were held. Two other organisations viz cultural-Guild a Federation of cultural organisations and Maharishi Dayananda Kranti Kendra, a youth organisation of Gujarat Arya Samaj also joined the campaign.

A huge people's demonstration was organised under the leadership of Shree Narendra Dave, Shree Vinay Kapadia, Pravin Rashtrapal GRA leaders Shree Mitra Mahesh Arya of Arya Samaj, Shree Surendra Bodiwala, Smt. Lina Shah of Federation of cultural organisation, Shree Kamlesh Thaker, well known film actor, at the Ahmedabad collector's office. The deputation led by Shree Narendra Dave then submitted the "memorandum" to the collector

A protest meeting was held under the presidentship of Prof. Dr. Prakash sharma of Gujarat university, where leading public men and artists from various fields also vehemently criticised the Government policy of "Tax-Exemption" to such films. In the meeting leading artist and editor of widely circulated film weekly, "CHITRALOK" shreshashikant Nanavati film music Director of Shree Kshemu Divetia, film script writer shree Daulat Bhatt, film art Director Shree Ramakumar Rajpura well known film actor, shree Kamlesh Thaker, Thakeri Prof. Mahsheh Deva, Mrs. Nilam Devi Gawadia a leading public social worker and GRA leaders shree

C.K. Balan, Vinay Kapadia and Sh Pravin Rashtrapal spoke.

A strong delegation under the leadership of GRA secretary, Shree Narendra Dave met shree Popabhai Vyas, the cultural minister of Gujarat Govt. at Gandhinagar and submitted the "memorandum".

The leading dailies and film magazines gave wide publicity to GRA campaign and leading columnists of the press wrote special "write ups" supporting GRA campaigns.

Because of the massive campaign GRA, the government of Gujarat had to consider the public opinion and the cultural minister announced that, the Government policy is under review and tax-exemption will be considered on merit and government has written to "censor-board" for fixing up certain "norms" for such films.

This victory was another feather in the cap of G. R. A. in the recent month GRA workers are planning to hold the "Gujarat state Conference" at Ahmedabad sometime in next December.

* * *

IHEU HONOURS Mr. V. M. TARKUNDE

Mr. V.M. Tarkunde was given a rare award by the International Humanist and Ethical Union for the work done by him for civil liberty in India during the emergency.

Conferring the honour Prof. Mihail professor of Philosophy, University of Belgium, Praised Mr Tarkunde's service in the cause of democracy and described him as a great humanist,

The former judge of Bombay High Court and President of the Indian Radical

Humanist Association joined the distinguished company of Prof. Berry Commoner, U.S.A., and Mr. Harold Backham, U.K.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony attended by delegates from 20 countries, Mr. Tarkunde warned that if the limited democracy" which existed in India today was replaced by a stable authoritarian rule, the fate of democracy in the rest of the third world was likely to be sealed for several generations.

* *

GOD SAVE THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Sanjiva Reddy, President of India told 130 M.P's who met him on 10-8-78 that he did not want to get "too much involved openly". But that did not mean that he was not aware of the problems the country was facing. He hoped God would give the M.P's, himself and all others wisdom so that all might rise to the occasion and help the country.

It is well and good if the M.P.'s, President, etc. get the badly needed wisdom atleast in due course. But, then what would happen to the country if the God does not oblige the President. Answer is simple. Country will go to dogs—and the blame can be squarely put on the innocent gods!

* *

SNAKE - GOD KILLS 23 PERSONS

"It is reliably gathered that in the snake affected tract of Pharsabhar, Bagbhar and Kansahel, rich in alluvial Gold about 19 persons have so far died of snake bite, while another 4 persons died of snake bite in Pathalgaon tract so far this season.

According to the DHO, though the PHCs are equipped with snake venoms and publicity being made, yet very rarely victims are brought to hospitals. Instead they depend too much on spells" he said.

The above news item appeared in 'Nagpur Times' dt 8-8-78 i.e. just one day before 'Nag - Panchami' when lacs of gullibles worship the snakes, offering milk etc. Will the concerned 'God's' look into the matter?

—Alok Tiwari, Nagpur

* *

TEMPLE JEWELS STOLEN

Jewels belonging to the Venugopala-swami temple on Gopalapuram second street were found stolen on Monday night. Forensic Science experts have taken finger prints and the theft is being investigated.

According to police, the stolen goods include a glass box containing a silver vel presented by DMK president M. Karunanidhi. He had received the vel as a memento from Tiruttani temple.

* *

3 DIE IN TEMPLE ACCIDENT

Three persons including a two year old child were crushed to death when a 100 foot long front elevation of a temple in Sitarambagh area in Hyderabad collapsed

* *

THE BLACKISH WHITE.

When one ailing hobo was rushed to a Johannesburg hospital in South Africa he was refused admission on the excuse that the hospital catered exclusively to whites. However, after a thorough scrubbing to wash off the grime and filth of several months, if not more, the hobo was hospitalized. He was white underneath it all. Δ

Readers' Forum

VEGETARIANISM

In the April issue of FREETHOUGHT you asked for readers' comments on Vegetarianism: is it a fad, or should the rationalist movement take it seriously?

I do not deny for a moment that in the West, America and Australia vegetarianism as a movement has become bedevilled with food faddism, mysticism and superstition. The British writer, Brigid Brophy, is the only militant freethinker who immediately comes to my mind as being active in "western" vegetarian movements. However, the present disappointing situation should not blind rationalists to the moral and practical case for vegetarianism.

Living as I do near an Australian city's slaughterhouse and its animal pens I am regularly reminded of the moral case against exploiting animals for their meat and milk. Farming animals for such purpose (at least in the West) involves: artificial breeding methods; castration (to encourage gain in weight); premature separation of mother from offspring; overcrowding; long and exhausting journeys of animals to the slaughter yards. The inequities of this regimen are compounded by that in most climates more desirable plant protein can be raised by a hectare of land than can animal protein. The meat-milk industry is not only cruel; it is wasteful.

Some Indian freethinkers have, I know, encouraged the eating of beef and pork as a means of assailing the whole body of Hindu superstition and tradition. While I can, within limits, see the value of "shock tactics", may I respectfully suggest that in the long term this particular method

may prove to be counterproductive. One might just as well try to assault christian taboos and irrationalism by advising European to revert to cannibalism!

I feel certain that, if we are to move towards an age in which the world's good, and other resources are shared fairly, vegetarianism will become -- will have to become the norm. It is essential, therefore, that rationalists take up this issue and see that the public is informed of the real moral and ethical issues involved, not the pseudo-science with which it is at present encumbered. Here India (once again) can pave the way!

Perhaps I should, in closing, make it clear that while I am currently the Secretary of the Secular Society of Victoria (Australia) and am a former editor of the Freethinker (London), the opinions I have given here are strictly my personal ones.

Nigel H. Sinnott, Australia

BEWARE OF BRIDES

This is in reference to the letter captioned 'Women and Dowry' published in May, 1973 issue of FREETHOUGHT.

If you kindly excuse me, I wish to say that the denouncing of dowry system has become a mere fashion, these days.

Is not the dowry problem due to the girls and their calculating parents and guardians? I was a member of IMB of IRA for a short period. After some bitter experience, I preferred to refrain, though, I am not for perpetuating dowry system.

FREETHOUGHT

In her letter your so-called victim of dowry system prefers a graduate or a diploma holder whereas she is only an under graduate. Is a bride an employer who appoints a person verifying his qualification? Is she sure that a young man with a University Degree becomes a good life partner? Why do girls always prefer men better qualified than they are, whereas men never hesitate to marry an ill-qualified girl?

This girl writes that all men demand dowry. Men spend thousands of rupees to acquire a degree hence is it wrong to ask for dowry (for she emphasises only on the qualification)? Before reforming others one should reform oneself.

Now-a-days girls marry men's positions only and not them as individuals. I also have no sympathy for the bargaining grooms who are mere "buffaloes for hire" managed by their parents.

I would like to narrate a bitter experience as a would-be bridegroom. The counsellor of the IMB sent me a proposal. Accepting it and on the invitation of the girl's father, I went to their house spending about Rs.100/-. The father of the girl wanted proof of my qualification. He was also not as much interested in my research work as he was in my earning capacities. I have been rejected by the parents of the girl because of their material interest. These are the hard realities of life.

Man's selfishness is limited and clearly visible in the form of dowry whereas girls' selfishness is unlimited and hidden. Hence there is no meaning in blaming young men for the evil of dowry.

Your bemoaning girl writes that no one accepts a poor girl. If a poor girl accepts a poor boy, it is not impossible to find a match. Instead, if she needs only a well-to-do, well-settled, well-qualified and good-looking young man, she is greedy. Your good offices are misused by greedy girls.

In my opinion dowry system can be eradicated only by forming a classless society. Private property perpetuates this evil. Till the manifestation of a classless society, the most effective remedy is love marriages. When the bride and bridegroom are mutually interested then the intervening commercial factors disappear. So I.R.A. which is valiantly fighting against religion, god, superstition etc., must fight against this dirty system of arranged marriages. I would like I.R.A. leaders at least to propagate in future self-respect marriages.

In conclusion, I would like to give an advice to this aspirant. How could she share a life with a person interested in her money. If we do not like even friends to be selfish, it must be more true of a person with whom one has to share her life. We can live without marrying. I am determined to be alone without marrying till I find a girl not interested in my position. Similarly she too could wait boldly. She need not be disheartened. We are not animals and hence we cannot share life with strangers. Individual tastes, habits and mentalities differ making adjustment a difficult task. Even a marriage arranged by the I.R.A. cannot be a marriage in the true sense of the word.

C. Chandra Sekhar. Vijayawada

The Bible Contradicts Itself, Bible Absurdities & Archaeology and the Bible

by John Bowden.

Published by Ingersoll News for the Rationalist Association of New Zealand and Australia.

"When it is universally recognised that there is nothing supernatural about the Bible that it is a purely human product — the book will then take its proper place among the world's literature," writes Bowden. But he admits that day seems far off as long as it continues to be a convenient "instrument of ecclesiastical domination."

These three pamphlets examine the Bible, verse by verse, to turn up an impressive number of contradictions and historical fiction with that modern archaeology has proved interested people have tampered with the truth for their own ends.

Archaeology has often fallen into disrepute because of the number of charlatans it can accommodate, because if one has decided before hand what one is going to find, it is easily turned up by a spade. In June of 1865, a Palestine Exploration Fund was set up under the Archbishop of York to depute Professor R.A. Macalister to carry out excavations in Palestine to corroborate the Bible accounts of Hebrew history, miracles and cosmic catastrophes stage-managed by God. Scientific considerations were to be of secondary importance.

Not to be excluded, Germany, France and America also sponsored expeditions and "digs" turned up evidence that everything that happened in the Bible was true. If evidence conflicted with the accounts it

was clearly a case of misinterpretation of the Word of God by fallible humans.

Serious scholars, however, trace the Creation story to Babylon sources, and Bowden points out, quoting verses, that Genesis has two divergent accounts. Accounts of floods are also found in Babylonian and Assyrian literature, and archaeological evidence of floods are found only within certain areas of a few hundred square miles, whereas the Biblical account tells of a universal inundation. Until recently the story of Noah's Ark resting on Mt. Ararat kept cropping up in the press, until it was finally debunked in 1960 by a six-man American expedition who said it was nothing but a lava-shaped mound.

To give just one sample of how Biblical archaeologists fabricated evidence to satisfy those who contributed to the cost of their expeditions: Professor Grimme of Munich University, studied the photographs of certain ancient stones and deciphering what he imagined was a script, but which was really the flaking and weathering of the stones, claimed it was a graven record of Moses' gratitude to Pharaoh's daughter for rescuing him from among the bulrushes of the Nile!

Contradictions in the texts of the entire Bible often reduce the textual content to nonsense and in *The Bible Contradicts Itself*, Bowden combs through both Testaments in proof, e.g. Adam was to die the day he ate of the tree of knowledge according to Genesis 2:17; but Genesis 5:5 describes him as living to 930 years. Or again Cain is cursed to live as a fugitive in Genesis 4:14-15 but the 17th verse describes him marrying, building a city and establishing a long line of descendants.

While no serious student would deny that there is some authentic history found in the Bible, it must be distinguished from a mass of myth, legend, folk-lore and pseudo-history. In this context the book assumes the same significance as the Mahabharata and Ramayana. All reflect social conditions of their time, yet none are entirely true or authentic for their compilers have bent history to make certain religious and spiritual points.

However, among Christians, certain sects refuse to see any contradictions in the text

since nothing divinely inspired can possibly be wrong. Says the author of a pamphlet on How to Read the Bible: "Though the writers were divided by class, by country, by age by disposition, there is a wonderful harmony in all they wrote. Whence came this wonderful unit? From God: They all wrote under divine inspiration. They were God's agents, proclaiming His message unto men..."

To such closed minds "the Bible becomes a fetish, an object of blind devotion and superstitious veneration."

Bible Absurdities puts one in mind of Professor Ajnal's statistical analysis of the Hindu Epics. For instance, calculating the rate of increase of the Israelites held in bondage in Egypt, the average works out to 66 children apiece to bring the number to three million. At the Exodus out of Egypt, with this number marching "five in a rank" with their herds and sheep, the column would have extended over 400 miles. But we are told they were out of the country within three hours—travelling, no doubt, at a speed of 130 m.p.h. to wander in a wilderness for forty years an area which was as long as their column at its widest limit!

The Bible is not only a mixture of good and bad, it is a product of many hands and follows a cultural tradition through a certain historical process of a people often barbarous in the extreme, ruled by a God who, not suprisingly, indulged in a similar barbarity. Most of its moral sentiments were derived from pagan sources and these are more than counter-balanced by its unspeakable grossness and barbarity.

Archaeological research has not established the entire truth of the Bible but proved that the Holy Writ is often factually untrue. That ecclesiastical authorities refuse to recognise this reality, leads one to the reluctant conclusion their persistent dissemination has a maltrial motive. They batten on glib people's credulity, for a statement that is demonstrably false completely shatters the case for 'inspiration' proving that the Bible is without authority." ▷

—Ms. M.R. Bhatt

(Cont. from page No 274)

the jobs in a normal way. When I talked about this experience to others, I was surprised to discover that in rural areas, possession by spirits is accepted as a normal part of their life.

INFORMATION GATHERED FROM MAULVI

I had 2 sessions of discussions with the Maulvi on 25-6-78 and 28-6-78 and the information collected is given in brief.

The Maulvi gets on an average 20 to 25 cases in a month. He does not charge any fees

There are many types of male and female spirits roaming in the space. They are known by different names. The most wicked amongst them is known as "Khabeez"—'Shekh Sahib' is another which remains hidden inside the victim. These are male. 'Parit' and 'Churel' are the female spirits. The spirits of persons who meet unnatural death belong to a separate category and exist as a result of unfulfilled passions and attachments to places and causes of their own time. The ghosts or spirits usually stay in old houses, wells, tanks, etc. They can move as they will but find it difficult to enter the bodies of persons who are 'pious'. Spirits are sometimes benign and shower benefits on some persons. But if treated badly whether deliberately or not, they turn malevolent and vengeful.

The Maulvi admitted that he is not an exorcist who keeps ghosts under control. He gave details of a number of cases in which he exorcised and extracted the names of the spirits. He regretted that in spite of curing cases which defied medical treatment, by extracting the spirit, many people refuse to believe the existence of spirits. ▷

Test for Reason No. 12

DINESH NETTAR

For a change a popular and easy problem is being given this month. This problem was originally composed by the great Italian Mathematician — Thathalia of the 16th century.

Three men A, B and C along with their wives Mrs. A, Mrs. B and Mrs. C are on a pilgrimage. At one place they have to cross a lake to reach a temple situated in the middle of the lake.

There is a small boat at the bank but a maximum of two persons only can go in it. Unfortunately all the three husbands are so jealous and suspicious that no one is prepared to leave his wife at either of the banks or in the boat in the company of other men without himself being present. In other words every man wants his wife to be in his company or in his absence, she should be in the company of women only. Though all the six of them know rowing, they are unable to find out a way to cross the lake. Can you help them.

Rules :

1. The entries should be received on or before 15-9-'78

2. There is a prize of Rs. 10/- in the form of books to be sent to the winner. If there are more than one correct entry, the prize will be decided on lots.

3. Readers are requested to quote their Membership or Subscription number.

Solution to Test for Reason No. 11

The minimum number of persons that can be invited is one.

Suppose H (host) has married the daughter of his maternal uncle MU I and H's brother and sister have married the daughter and son respectively of his another maternal uncle MU II. Now H invites MU II who is

1. H's brother-in-law's (sister's husband) father
2. H's Father-in-law's brother
3. H's brother's father-in-law
4. H's father's brother-in-law

The following have sent correct answers :

1. Mr. Chander Raju, kalpakkam
 2. Mr. J. S. Jaswal, shillong
 3. Mr. G. K. Nayar, N. Parur
 4. Mr. S. V. Baul, Kazipet
 5. Mr. Roy Phillip, Baroda
 6. Mr. M. T. Sathyanathan, Calicut
 7. Mr. N. Vijayakumar, Kurnool
- Mr. M. T. Sathyanathan gathyanathan gets the prize in the draw.

The following have sent correct solutions for Test for Reason No. 10

1. Mr. Chander Raju, Kalpakkam
 2. Mr. G. Kumar, Madras
 3. Mr. Nelson Gomez; Cochin
- Mr. Chander Raju, gets the prize in the draw

IRA ENDOWMENT FUND

It is regretted that the response for our appeal for liberal contributions for IRA Endowment Fund has been very disappointing. We are, however, grateful to the following donors :

| | | Rs. p. |
|--|------|---------|
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| | | 225 00 |
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| | | ----- |
| | | 1508 65 |
| | | ----- |

Amount already deposited in Fixed Deposit : Rs. 1,500/- Other rationalist sympathisers are once again requested to rush their contributions. Demand Drafts and Cheques may please be drawn in favour of Indian Rationalist Association.

—Treasurer, I.R.A.

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 ** Converted from Ordinary Membership

—General Secretary, I.R.A.

A LAND MARK IN THE RATIONALISTS CRUSADE

IRA'S PROUD PUBLICATION

GOD CHECK MATED**(A Multi purpose Unique Questionnaire)***A. Harnath and A. Suryanara*

From this issue onwards a Multi-purpose questionnaire under the above caption is being serialised. While two sections are being covered in the issue, seven more—God and Religion, God and Destiny, God and Soul, God and Universe, God and Evolution, God and Man and God and superstition will follow in the next two issues.

The entire questionnaire will be brought out as a separate booklet on 17th September 78. While the price is being fixed at Rs. 3.75 for 5 copies, orders received before 17-9-78 will be executed at a concessional rate of Rs. 3/- for 5 copies.

Please order for your requirements in multiples of 5 copies. A special discount of 20% will be allowed on orders for 20 or more copies.

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